

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION ANALYSIS

There have been many analyses and position statements issued for and against the Korea trade agreement. In particular, the analysis by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation is persuasive. In its conclusion, the LACEDC said:

"KORUS would create multiple opportunities for both U.S. goods and services. On the goods side, the agreement opens the 12th largest economy's large middle class of consumers to American-made goods. On the services side, the agreement opens up South Korea's \$560 billion services market to American and Los Angeles area based companies."

"The agreement also creates new opportunities for the U.S. manufacturing industry. And the manufacturing capital of the U.S. is Los Angeles County. Thus the local economy has a lot to look forward to in the coming years, as increased exports will boost economic growth and create new and well paid jobs in the Los Angeles region."

COLOMBIA-U.S. TRADE AGREEMENT

There are compelling foreign policy reasons to pass the Colombia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Colombia is an important U.S. ally in the Western Hemisphere, and this agreement will help cement our relationship. The FTA will also increase American exports, providing a needed economic boost for the U.S. economy and the creation of new jobs here at home.

I've listened very carefully to the debate on issues of human rights and labor rights in Colombia, the horrific levels of violence, and its deplorable track record in bringing to justice those accused of violating these rights. These issues are profoundly important to me and I will continue to work with the government of Colombia to ensure that the Labor Action Plan is fully implemented. I believe it is in the interests of both the United States and Colombia to subject this FTA to labor rights and human rights conditions.

President Obama deserves credit as the first President to shine such a sharp spotlight on labor issues in Colombia, and it is fair to say that this FTA addresses labor issues more fully than any FTA before it. The Action Plan agreed to by the White House and the government of Colombia on April 7 was comprehensive and highlighted specific areas where it could improve its record on labor issues. And in his October 3 letter transmitting the FTA to Congress, the President pledged that he would not bring the agreement into force until key elements of the Action Plan are implemented.

Results matter and the kinds of fundamental changes we seek from and wish for Colombia and its people will be a long term process. I have derived great comfort in the positive sea-change that President Santos has represented for Colombia, but I will be watching closely for progress and whether this transformative President fulfills his promises to change the labor and human rights environment in Colombia.

PANAMA-U.S. TRADE AGREEMENT

While Panama's trade with the U.S. is small, the U.S.-Panama trade agreement includes enforceable labor standards for Panamanian workers, compulsory Panamanian membership in multilateral environmental agreements—both included at the behest of the U.S. administration and Congress. Under this agreement,

88% of U.S. commercial and industrial exports would become duty-free upon implementation, with remaining tariffs phased out over a 10-year period.

More than 50% of U.S. farm exports to Panama also would achieve immediate duty-free status, with tariffs and tariff rate quotas (TRQs) on select farm products to be phased out by year 17 of the agreement (year 20 for rice). The agreement also contains provisions on telecommunications, services trade, government procurement, investment, intellectual property rights and tax transparency—the latter to address Panama's significant problems with money laundering.

UNITED STATES-KOREA FREE
TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3080, the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. The United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, or KORUS, is the most significant trade agreement our country has entered into since NAFTA sixteen years ago, and it would help stimulate the U.S. economy at no cost to the American taxpayers.

Trade liberalization is a consistent precursor to global economic growth, and when done with a fair and close trading partner, could prove critical to American economic recovery. The current fiscal environment facing the federal government requires that we pursue all available options to create jobs and spur economic growth. Currently, the Republic of Korea is the world's twelfth largest economy and our seventh largest trading partner. This trade agreement will remove nearly 95 percent of tariffs on consumer and industrial goods within three years, create approximately 70,000 jobs nationwide, and increase U.S. GDP by an estimated \$10 to \$12 billion.

Further, Korea's strong record on labor rights and environmental protection ensures that American firms will compete on a level playing field with their Korean counterparts. By increasing trade with Korea, American businesses will have greater access to a nearly \$1.5 trillion economy. The provisions included in the agreement will improve intellectual property rights protections and benefit businesses across all sectors of the American economy.

KORUS would also strengthen our relationship with a critical democratic ally and reaffirm our nation's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region. As the first trade agreement between the United States and a North Asian country, KORUS underscores this strategic alliance and may serve as a model for future agreements across the region. Moreover, the benefits of this longstanding partnership are evident on Guam, where Korea was first accepted into the Guam Visa Waiver Program. To date, Korean visitors remain the second largest group to visit Guam annually.

The United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement would stimulate the U.S. economy, create jobs, and increase economic competitiveness of the United States in East Asia. I

strongly support the passage of H.R. 3080, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

CONGRATULATING MARTIN'S
POINT HEALTH CARE MEDICARE
ADVANTAGE PLANS

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, today I am thrilled to congratulate Martin's Point Health Care Medicare Advantage plans for receiving five-star quality ratings from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Martin's Point Health Care is a not-for-profit health care organization that provides primary care services, health plans, and wellness services in Maine and other parts of northern New England.

Under the direction of their president and chief executive officer, Dr. David Howes, Martin's Point has established a long tradition of providing high quality, efficient, and affordable care to thousands of veterans, seniors, and families in Maine.

Today CMS announced that Martin's Point has received five-star ratings for both its Value and Prime Medicare Advantage plans—the highest possible rating granted by CMS.

High quality care is not new to Martin's Point: for the last 3 years, Martin's Point has had the highest rated Medicare Advantage plan in Maine. But I am particularly proud to say that it is one of only nine Medicare Advantage organizations in the entire country to receive the CMS five-star designation for 2012.

The five-star rating system helps Medicare beneficiaries compare available plans and make meaningful choices about which plans are right for them based on quality of care and customer service. As a five-star plan, Martin's Point will be able to assure potential patients that they offer the highest quality, patient-centered care. And thanks to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, this five-star rating will make Martin's Point Health Care eligible for quality bonus payments from CMS to help bolster their good work and ensure that patients in Maine will continue to benefit from their services for years to come.

I want to congratulate Dr. Howes and the entire team of health care providers and support staff at Martin's Point for this tremendous accomplishment. Their commitment to delivering quality health care and service excellence is second to none.

As we continue to work to shift our health care system to one that better values quality outcomes and patient experience, Martin's Point will stand as a model for health care organizations across the country, and a real asset to the people of Maine.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, October 11, I missed a couple of